

Stamford Hospital
STATEMENT ON TIME MAGAZINE STORY
February 22, 2013

It is no secret that healthcare finance in the United States is complex and not always logical or fair. This situation certainly affects individual consumers, but also hospitals like Stamford Hospital. It is unfortunate that some would use isolated facts and unusual circumstances as the basis for conclusions about an industry in general or a hospital like ours in particular.

Hospitals today are pressured by cuts in Medicare and Medicaid reimbursements, aggressive negotiating by insurance providers, mushrooming equipment, labor, and pharmaceutical costs, and the desires of healthcare consumers for state-of-the-art treatment. And hospitals are one of the few organizations required to prove, year after year, that they are losing millions by serving customers who can't afford to pay. Stamford Hospital is fortunate to be financially viable, but what positive operating margin is available is reinvested in the hospital. In fact, Stamford Hospital has reinvested on the order of \$300 million in equipment and capital needs over the last 10 years because we want to provide the highest quality, most technologically advanced care to our patients.

The "chargemaster" at a hospital is nothing more than a compilation of "list prices," which – as is the case for products and services ranging from cars and television sets to air travel – consumers rarely pay. It is wrong to blame hospitals for a system they did not create; the chargemaster is a regulatory requirement for all hospitals.

Stamford Hospital has an active financial assistance program that works with patients with financial circumstances to reduce bills to affordable levels or even write them off completely. For example, our financial assistance policy provides an uninsured patient who is part of a family of four with income of three times the 2013 Federal poverty guidelines (\$70,650) a discount of 80% of charges. We provided assistance to almost 11,500 patients and had the highest percentage of uncompensated care of total expenses of all 30 hospitals in Connecticut in 2011, based on the latest state figures.

It is also worth noting the article contains incorrect information about Stamford Hospital and misquotes from Hospital representatives.